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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Illinois has a reputation as an economic
3 powerhouse, demonstrated by globally recognized businesses
4 producing cutting edge technologies and high-value services, a
5 gross state product of more than \$600 billion in 2007, and the
6 fifth largest state economy in the nation; and

7 WHEREAS, Jobs that require more than a high school
8 education but less than a 4-year degree ("middle-skill jobs")
9 currently make up the largest segment of jobs in this State's
10 economy and will continue to do so for years to come; and

11 WHEREAS, More than half of Illinois jobs in 2006 were
12 middle-skill jobs, representing more than 3 million workers;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, The portion of jobs that are middle-skill jobs in
15 this State is greater than the portion in the nation as a
16 whole; and

17 WHEREAS, The demand for middle-skill workers in Illinois is
18 expected to increase between 2004 and 2014, to about one
19 million middle-skill job openings; and

20 WHEREAS, Middle-skill jobs will be the majority of jobs

1 needed to build this State's and the nation's green economy;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Middle-skill workers include those that work in
4 occupations critical to our communities' safety and
5 infrastructure, including police officers, fire fighters,
6 nurses, therapists and other medical technicians, air traffic
7 controllers, electricians, and mechanics; and

8 WHEREAS, Middle-skill jobs are local, hands-on jobs and are
9 unlikely to be outsourced to other countries; and

10 WHEREAS, In Illinois, 51% of all jobs are classified as
11 middle-skill, but only 43% of Illinois workers likely have the
12 education and training required to fill these positions; and

13 WHEREAS, The National Commission on Adult Literacy's most
14 recent report revealed that more than 350,000 Illinoisans
15 between the ages of 18 and 64 lacked a high school credential;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, These trends will worsen in Illinois over the next
18 15 years as the proportion of low-skill workers in this State's
19 workforce is likely to increase at the same time that the
20 percentage of middle-skill workers is projected to decline; and

1 WHEREAS, At the same time there is a decline in educational
2 attainment in the workforce, there has been a steady and steep
3 decline in federal funding for workforce education and training
4 programs, including funding that supports adults to get
5 associate degrees, vocational certificates, and
6 apprenticeships and that are offered in both community-based
7 training organizations and community colleges; and

8 WHEREAS, Two-thirds of the people who will be in this
9 State's workforce in the year 2020 were already working adults
10 in 2005, which means that most of the workforce of 2020 will be
11 people already beyond grade K through 12 education; and

12 WHEREAS, We need to prepare adults currently in the
13 workforce, who could benefit significantly from new
14 investments in education and training, to be part of the
15 solution to the middle-skill gap facing our State today and in
16 the years ahead; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
18 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
19 this State must guarantee up to 2 years of post-secondary
20 education or training for all Illinoisans; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That this educational goal must be the core of
22 our State's economic development, workforce development, and

1 post-secondary education strategies; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That if our economic development, workforce
3 development, and post-secondary education policies are built
4 from this shared goal to individuals, families and communities
5 across our State will experience greater prosperity.